

Mel Inman stands inside his repaired freezer.
Photo: Andrew Lightman



BY PETER J. WALDRON

The North Hall Update

At the September Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee meeting, Barry Margeson, interim market manager, reported there has been an avalanche of inquiries about the North Hall (capacity 750), a huge potential revenue source for the Eastern Market. Margeson is now engaged in finding a balance between strong revenue growth and appropriate community use as mandated by the Market legislation.

Margeson presented a complicated draft price structure of rental rates which act as current booking prices. Weddings, fundraisers and receptions prices range from \$ 2800 to \$5100 depending on the hours, time of day and the number of expected guests. Community groups and Hill residents are to be offered a discounted structure with prices starting at \$150 for “instructional events” and growing to between \$500 to \$1000 for public or private arts and community events.

EMCAC members raised a number of salient issues. Its members were in near unanimity that the pricing was too confusing and needed to be simplified. Other concerns were how and when the space could be made available for community groups, the break-even cost of an event, and the definition of who is a community member when in the end it

has been District taxpayers who have paid for the Market restoration. Costs for a typical event which include management and maintenance are expected to be \$400 according to Margeson. Alcohol may be served, but there are some restrictions.

Currently the North Hall has held one major fundraiser with 18 events scheduled over the next three months: among them a square dance, a Girl's Rock benefit and the return of the tango classes held weekly before the fire. Larry Gallo, EMCAC's Treasurer, asked for financial data, a budget and a financial plan for both the Market and specifically the North Hall and this request was echoed by other EMCAC members.

For information on booking an event contact Barry Margeson at 202-741-0940 or barry.margeson@dc.gov.

Progress on Punch List

Eastern Market crowds were strong through the traditionally slow months of July and August. The South Hall's list of unfinished construction items at the time of the opening was 44 pages, due in part to a mayoral commitment to get the Market open by summer. According to John Crudele, Senior Superintendent of Forney Construction, the contractual documents are being reviewed carefully with the last of the major issues being the tweaking of the new sophisticated computerized HVAC system and its coordination with skylight ceiling fans and windows that are temperature dependent. Crudele, in wrapping up the Market restoration project, said: “There are no big things to do. We are down to one page.”

However, since the opening of the \$20 million renovation project, the newly plastered walls have developed significant cracks along the northwestern wall. A whole section of wall has now been removed and samples are under study. According to Crudele, “It is not a normal thing. The plaster is being evaluated and then we will take corrective action.”

Another issue which clearly affected business was the horrific stench emanating from the walk-in refrigeration at Market Poultry, which spread throughout the Market. The initial cause according to owner Mel Inman was that no drain had been installed in the refrigerated unit. Then when the drain was installed, it was done incorrectly, leaving no way to drain off water and decomposing chicken parts. According to Inman, his business and that of adjacent merchants suffered even as the Market soared through its opening months. In-

man, shaking his head in relief that this three month ordeal is over, says: “It is fixed now. It killed my business. But I am pleased with the city. I am happy to say they have done what is necessary.”

Newly purchased display counters are too high and inaccessible to both customers and employees many of whom continue to stand on plastic milk cartons. The solution of whether to lower these units or replace them awaits a decision by Market architects, Quinn Evans. The Capitol Hill Community Foundation has again stepped forward and offered to pay part of this cost with revenues raised from the community after the April 2007 fire.

Eastern Market Community Advisory Committee representative and owner of Union Meats Bill Glasgow predicted throughout the post fire planning that strong light produced from the restored windows and new skylight would produce discoloration of meat and fresh food products. Three months after the June opening, market management is now testing blinds for blocking out strong daily light. “The light is cooking Bill's meat in the cases and killing my flowers” said Angie Brunson of Blue Iris Flowers.

Hine & Weekend Flea Markets

Ken Golding, a partner at Stanton Development / East Banc, which was awarded the redevelopment rights to the closed Hine school, said that there is no intention to end the weekend flea market, noting that part of the winning Hine proposal includes the placement of the flea market along the newly created C St as well as space in the interior piazza which will also be populated with shops and restaurants. Groundbreaking is expected to take place, according to one source familiar with the details, in late 2011. Hine is the site of the two privately managed weekend flea markets.

Golding states there are a multitude of issues to be worked out with the District and several public

EMCAC Elections

EMCAC will hold elections for officers at its October 21st monthly meeting beginning at 7:00PM at the Old Naval Hospital. There will be an additional election for the independent community seat. Interested residents are welcome to contact Donna Scheeder at dsch@loc.gov

Mayoral Appointment

Just announced, Neil Albert, the City Administrator, has been appointed by Mayor Fenty to EMCAC and will serve as the Mayor's representative.

agencies including EMCAC, but makes clear that “we will provide space on Saturday and Sunday” for the flea markets. One suggestion proposed is that lower 7th St. be closed from C St. to Pennsylvania Ave. during the construction to accommodate the flea market.

Tom Rall, operator of the Sunday flea market who has been severely impacted by the loss of revenue from the North Hall with its lease expiration, worries that he will not be protected and thus displaced in this complicated process. Rall, instrumental in the incubation and growth of the flea market for 26 years, contends it was his promotional work while the Market advertising was otherwise fallow that was singular in driving the arts and craft market forward. “For 26 years I was the only promoter for Eastern Market. It fell on my shoulders totally. There was no consistent advertising except from me. I spent almost \$250,000 in out-of-pocket expenses.”

Carol Wright, whose Saturday flea market has been operational since 1997, insists that her contract must be honored. “Everything is status quo for the next 15 months” she said. Wright actively supported Stanton Development/East Banc in its bid and the payoff is they “made the commitment of a long term relationship.” Wright responded by email about the impending disruption: “We know we have to be flexible. If we could make it through a market fire and reconstruction, the construction of a tent(the East Hall) , the closing of Hine, the creation of a parking lot and -- most difficult of all -- the streetscape [construction] while never missing a day’s business, we feel we are experienced at being flexible.”

Currently both Rall and Wright have contracts with District of Columbia Public Schools through 2010, but these become problematic if and when the District turns the property over to Stanton/East Blanc. ★

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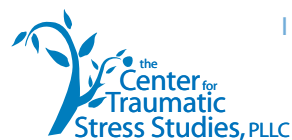
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Life in the Complex

At Eastern's Temporary Home, School Continues as Usual

BY KYLE JOHNSON

A school day at Eastern Senior High School still seems remarkably normal. The students still chat in the hallways in between class, they still participate in extracurricular activities and cheer on their football team, and the gymnasium is filled with the smell of school lunch food and the sound of students milling around.

But in this far from normal year, the school is shut down, with work underway on a top-to-bottom overhaul of the nearly 300,000-square-foot building. Classes are held in the “student learning complex” covering the tennis courts just east of the schools.

A spokesperson for the Office of Public Education Facilities Modernization, the DC agency responsible for updating the city's schools, said that the complex cost about \$1.5 million to build. Keeping the regular school open during construction and closing off individual sections of the building at a time would have cost about \$5 million.

The student learning complex is a system of trailers connected by elevated and covered walkways. The walkways, which are essentially large decks, have been named with input from the students and staff. University Lane contains the offices college-bound students go to for advice on getting into and paying for college; Main is reserved for the row of rooms housing the school's administration.

Classrooms are just a little smaller than the rooms in the school, but in many other ways, they are nicer. The classrooms, and almost everything in them, are brand new, a vast improvement on the disrepair found in some parts of regular building.

On a tour of the complex, students and staff said they were pleased with the Eastern they will occupy this year.

Stephanie Robinson, a senior, said that starting the school year in a dif-

ferent environment was a big transition, but it also has been exciting.

“It's good to come to a new place and still see faces that you know,” she said.

“Eastern was a really well put together school, and this is, too,” said senior Antoinette Barbour. “And being outside in between classes is actually a great transition for seniors planning to go to college.”

The OPEFM spokesperson said the complex is a lot easier to keep safe than the original school building because there aren't spots for students to hide. Security cameras lining the tops of the walkways also keep the complex safe.



Because of construction in the school, classes are held in a “student learning complex” just east of the school. Photo: Kyle Johnson

Students leave the student learning complex to get lunch at the gymnasium, the only part of the school building still in use. The rest of the school will be sealed off until construction is finished next summer. Photo: Kyle Johnson.



Continuing a Strong Tradition

If you ask those familiar with Eastern for an example of something the school is doing right, the health academy is frequently mentioned first.

Craig English was hired to run the academy in 2005, but it had existed for about 20 years prior to English's start. English worked in the health care industry for 10 years before being approached by a friend at the school system who told him about the health academy job.

“If you told me then that I would be a teacher today ... I probably would have laughed and said no way,” he said. “But I enjoy my job. I'm very lucky.”

The health academy currently offers emergency medical technician (EMT) and pharmacy technician training. Students completing the

program can become certified in those fields, helping them seek a career in health after graduation.

Hands-on training is a big part of the curriculum. Students practice performing CPR on an adult and baby dummy, take a look at the skeleton standing in the classroom and work at community events.

“We expect our students to kind of really become a part of that,” English said of the students’ work to help the community through health service events.

The health academy has also partnered with outside organizations to enhance learning and bring in more resources. CVS helps run the pharmacy technician training and the DC Fire Department helps out with the EMT certification. English said he is also looking to partner with UDC to start a nursing program in the academy and allow students to get UDC credit while in high school.

Kenneth Clayton didn’t know he wanted to go into medicine before enrolling in the academy, but the senior is now focused on that occupation. He’s not sure what specialty he will pursue, but he said he wants to be “the main doctor in the hospital.”

The health academy will be one of the few holdovers when Eastern’s new academic program starts next year. Charity Fesler of the school system’s Office of Portfolio Management said that the academy will be expanded to include a college preparatory focus.

English is on board with that plan, saying that increasing the “rigor and relevance” of the courses will help students succeed.

“We want them to pursue secondary study because we know in this day and age you can’t just have a high school degree and expect a great job,” he said.

Two Years to Prepare

Eastern failed to meet yearly progress targets in last spring’s DC Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) test, which is used to determine if schools are meeting the standards of the No Child Left Behind Act.

About 21.5 percent of Eastern’s students were proficient in reading on the test, one percent less than the year before. Less than 10 percent of all students, and less than 2 percent of male students, were proficient in math. The proficiency targets were 55 percent for math and 57 percent for reading.

Because Eastern’s students have annually scored well below the performance targets, the school is in its second year of “restructuring” – the No Child Left Behind classification that calls for dramatic changes at a school to improve education. Fesler said this year’s scores are one of the reasons “why we are going through this renovation process,” and said improving education at the city’s public high

schools is one of the greatest challenges facing the school system.

Sophomore students take the DC CAS each spring, and Eastern won’t have any sophomores until the 2011-2012 school year.

Having a few years to prepare for the next round of tests could help the school perform better in 2012, according to Eastern Instructional Coach Stephanie Reid. She said that the teachers have been busy implementing the school system’s new teaching and learning framework this year, in addition to emphasizing the importance of literacy and numeracy among the students.

Schools can get around the testing performance targets if they meet the “safe harbor” threshold by increasing student proficiency in a subject area by at least 10 percent in one year. If Eastern does not make safe harbor or reach the testing goals in 2012, the school will have to take some more restructuring steps.

“That’s not going to happen,” Fesler said, adding that the school system is optimistic that their academic redesign will improve the school’s academic performance.

An Opening at the Revolving Door?

As was noted in last month’s column, Eastern has had a rotating cast of principals in recent years – upon taking over last year, Principal William Chiselom was the 11th principal over a 13-year span.

School system officials have not said much publicly about Chiselom’s chances of retaining his role next year. At a recent planning meeting, school officials said next year’s principal would be identified by January.

Reid’s career has been similar to Chiselom’s: both taught at Eastern before moving to MM Washington (Chiselom was principal there), and both came back to Eastern last year. Reid said the school is on the right track and is ready for next year’s transition to a remodeled building and a redesigned academic program.

Annette Chisolm, an English teacher at Eastern, said she was “very biased” about wanting Chiselom to stay on as principal because she has been happy with the progress the school has made in his tenure. Chisolm started at Eastern last year.

“He is, from what I see, embracing the notion that Eastern is a very strong academic school,” Chisolm said. “My thinking is in order to move anything forward, you have to have some sort of semblance of loyalty.”

Talking broadly, Fesler said that there are good and bad things about sticking with someone who knows the school and hiring someone from the outside.

“I think both have their advantages, and that will have to be part of the decision-making process going into it,” she said. ★

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HILL EAST



LEFT: Extension of Massachusetts Avenue from 19th Street to the Anacostia River. Photo Credit: Courtesy Deputy Mayor for Economic Development.

RIGHT: An aerial view of the development site. Photo: Courtesy Deputy Mayor for Economic Development.

All Quiet on the Hill East Waterfront

Developers Await Selection, Remain Optimistic

BY HUNTER GORINSON

Almost a year after the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development (DMPED) released its short list of potential developers for the 50-acre, government-owned parcel known as Reservation 13, none of four teams vying for the \$1.5 billion project have heard any official word on the status of the selection process. At the same time, no progress appears to have been made on the congressionally mandated land swap that would see the General Services Administration transfer the site, which currently houses the former DC General Hospital and city jail, into the District's portfolio.

"The silence has been deafening," quipped Joe Sternlieb, Vice President of Acquisitions for Eastbanc — one of the four named developers. "I got a nice congratulatory e-mail from the project manager for Hill East when we won [an unrelated DMPED project], but I don't think that counts...We had another round of best and final offers that were due in September. DMPED is still working away at it."

With DMPED's originally projected first quarter 2009 timeframe for the selection of a master developer having come and gone, questions regarding the viability of yet another large scale District development have begun to swell. There are no

less than four other similarly scaled redevelopment projects ahead of Hill East on DMPED's to-do list, including the McMillan Sand Filtration Plant in Shaw, continued work on the Southeast Waterfront around Nationals Stadium, a new Southwest Waterfront, and the long bandied about Convention Center hotel and surrounding retail complex.

Most tellingly, plans for yet another, from-scratch development district at Poplar Point in Ward 8, were scuttled this past January with then Deputy Mayor Neil Albert stating, "[In] this extremely challenging economic environment it is no longer practical...to pursue the deal structure we currently have in place."

Initially, the 110-acre Poplar Point parcel was to be transferred to the District, along with the Hill East property, under the Federal and District of Columbia Government Real Property Act of 2006. Sponsored by DC Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, that piece of legislation intended to free up underutilized federal lands in Washington for the benefit of the District and its residents.

Nevertheless, Sean Madigan, Director of Communications at DMPED, said by e-mail that there was "no news as of yet" on the selection of a developer for Hill East and that the project offered "lots

of assumptions that need to be tested." He did not respond to follow-up inquiries as to the status of the land transfer or the ability of the project to move forward in a fragile economic climate. Similarly, representatives of the GSA and Congresswoman Norton did not return multiple calls pertaining to the future of the Hill East property.

Development Teams Remain Optimistic

For their part, the four development teams shortlisted by DMPED last November are remaining optimistic. Calvin Gladney is a Managing Partner with Mosaic Urban Partners -- one of the corporations that, along with Hunt Development, heads up HDG Waterfront Partners, whose Hill East proposal calls for an entirely green and sustainable development at the site.

"We're still excited and ready to develop Hill East as we envisioned...It's easily a ten year project, but in terms of the timing of anything, that remains to be seen," said Gladney when asked how the project's delays and the state of the markets could affect HDG's pitch for a fourth DC waterfront destination.

"There are many large-scale projects still moving forward. It's just a matter of how the projects

are set-up and we have a strong financial partner. Yes, we believe that we proposed a financially feasible and viable project even in this marketplace.”

Meanwhile, Eastbanc, the only company to vie for Hill East without several development partners, believes their proposed piecemeal approach to Hill East — one that allows for leasing and sales to other developers on an ad hoc, non-speculative basis — could result make the project attainable sooner rather than later.

“Our approach is to take the site and immediately begin programming it with interim uses and building infrastructure only. We’d build the infrastructure from 19th Street back to the water and create development paths that are development-ready. As we create value in the paths and the market returns, we would sell or lease them back to the marketplace...for immediate use,” said Sterlieb.

“So, if how many ever years from now, there’s demand for a residential, office, civic or institutional building or a healthcare facility, we can say that the road is there, the infrastructure is in place and you can break ground in six months. All you have to do is pull your permits.”

While the economic morass of financing such a large project all at once could indeed be the chief concern amongst District higher-ups, an October 2008 presentation to the World Bank by DMPED’s former Chief Operating Officer and the now current Deputy Mayor for Planning and Economic Development, Valerie Santos yields some interesting insights to the department’s planning processes.

After running down a list of three “key federal sites” considered to be of primary importance to DMPED -- Hill East and Poplar Point among them — she ended by highlighting the four foremost challenges obstructing the District’s plans. In the words of Deputy Mayor Santos herself, the number one obstacle for Hill East and its counterparts is not cash flow, but “bureaucratic inertia.” ★

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The Stanton Development Team
(from Left to Right):
Mary Lynn Reed, Ken Golding
and Kitty Kaupp. Photo: Andrew
Lightman.

Stanton-EastBanc To Develop Hine Site

Construction Could Start on Mixed-Use Development in 2011

BY KYLE JOHNSON

The District has picked a local development team led by Stanton Development Corporation and EastBanc to turn the 3.5-acre Hine Junior High School site into a mixed-use development that could reshape the neighborhood.

The Stanton-EastBanc plan has about 500,000 square feet of total development – 200,000 square feet of of-

fice space, 60,000 square feet of retail and restaurants, and 150 apartments. International Relief and Development, a nonprofit currently based in Virginia, will move its 200 employees to the site, and the Shakespeare Theatre Company will consolidate its administrative staff into the site. The plan also includes 150 below-ground parking spaces, but Stanton-EastBanc representatives said at community meetings earlier this year that that number could go up in the final plans.

Mayor Adrian Fenty said the plans for the site “will make a great neighborhood even greater,” citing the Stanton-EastBanc ties to the community.

Ward 6 Councilmember Tommy Wells also praised the pick, saying that this will “preserve the character of the historic Eastern Market, yet also create new family housing and retail that supports the community.”

Wells said there will be a “community driven process” to finalize the project and ensure that it fits in the neighborhood.

Reopening C Street

The winning proposal calls for the reopening of C Street SE between Seventh and Eighth Streets, with a large piazza located halfway down the block. The street would be closed for special events and the weekend, and the weekend flea market would move to the piazza.

Retail is planned for the ground floors of both sides of C Street, as well as in the new buildings slated

for Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. Office space will be located above the retail on Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, and residential units will be built along Eighth Street and the north side of C Street.

The building heights vary throughout the planned development. The residential unit on C Street would be four floors, with the rest of the site having a mix of five- and six-floor components.

The development will also include more than two acres of green roofs and roof gardens, in addition to a courtyard slated for the center of the project.

The development team’s proposal is not finalized, and it could take a while before work begins on the project. The developers will have to seek zoning changes for the site and get the project through a planned unit development process.

EastBanc founder Anthony Lannier told Real Estate Bisnow that groundbreaking could happen late next year, but a city announcement of the Stanton-EastBanc pick said work won’t start until 2011 at the earliest.

Support from the Hill

Stanton-EastBanc’s proposal received support from the Capitol Hill Restoration Society in June. The society’s letter to city planners said that the proposal was the best plan for the Hine site because it reflected smart growth and sustainable development, provided more affordable housing units than other plans, offered the best parking plan and would not hurt the weekend flea market.

Other groups offering support for the plan include the Stanton Park Neighborhood Association and the Market Row Association.

The Stanton team also had a number of Capitol Hill allies because of its previous work in the area. The developer worked on several buildings at the intersection of Seventh Street and Pennsylvania Avenue just across the street from the Hine site.

Eighth Street SE resident Derek Farwagi said that Stanton “has done some good work,” and city officials have done a good job keeping the community informed, but he is concerned about the scale of proposed development and what that could do to the community.

“I’ve always questioned the need



A schematic of the Stanton design for the Hine site. Photo: Courtesy Stanton Development.

for such a huge development in a historic neighborhood,” he said. “It doesn’t ... sit right.”

Farwagi is associated with Eyes on Hine, a group representing 13 households on the block of Eighth Street adjacent to the Hine site. He said Stanton’s preliminary proposal reflects the city’s decision to “maximize revenue” out of the land without necessarily matching the development to the surrounding community. Norma Wright of the Eastern Market Metro Community Association has publicly shared similar concerns since the developer announcement.

The height of the development, particularly along Eighth Street, is of particular concern to Farwagi. The proposal calls for the highest point on Pennsylvania Avenue. The development would be shorter on Eighth and Seventh Streets – between 40 and 50 feet tall.

Farwagi noted that the height could change because other groups have advocated for lower heights. ANC 6B commissioners did not support a particular development plan when weighing in on the issue earlier this year, but their guidelines for the Hine site recommended a height limit of 60 feet on Pennsylvania Avenue and reduced heights elsewhere.

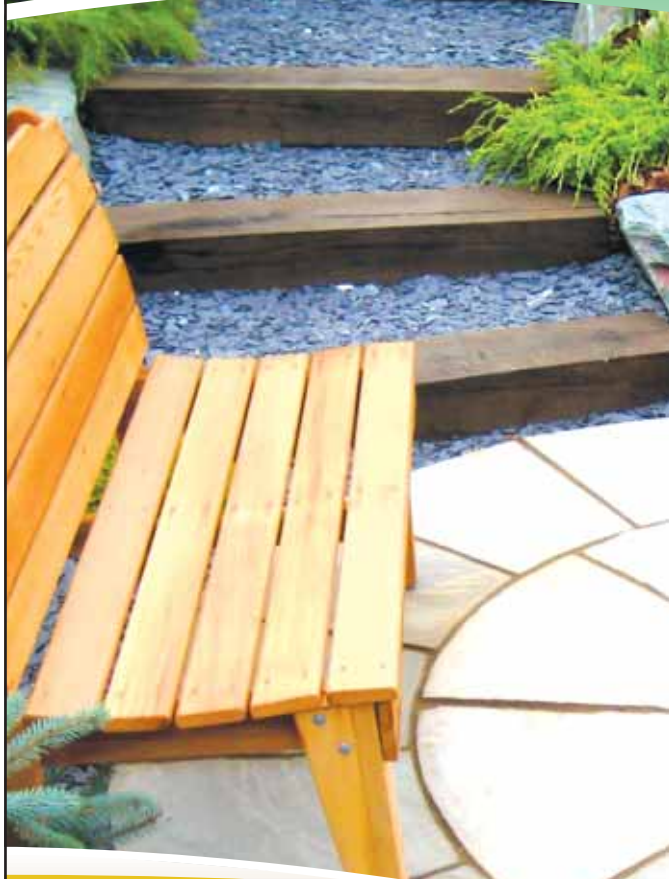
In addition to building height, Eyes on Hine members are concerned that preparatory work on the site (Farwagi said the existing buildings are “infested with asbestos”) could endanger area residents. Farwagi hopes city planners also take a look at traffic effects on the area, particularly on Eighth Street.

“It’s going to be a pretty dramatic change,” he said.

ANC 6B Commissioner Kirsten Oldenburg said the city’s pick of Stanton-EastBanc is just the beginning of a lengthy process, and the community will have many future opportunities to weigh in and help shape the future development.

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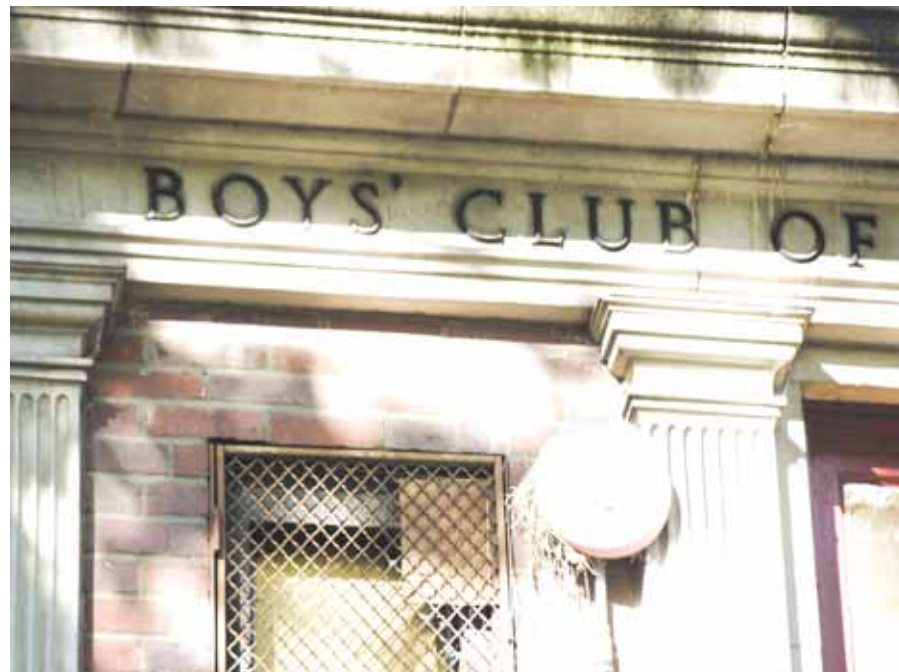
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A potentially beautiful old building, the Eastern Branch is in much need of repair. Photos: Andrew Lightman

The Future of the Eastern Branch Boys and Girls Club

New Task Force Will Determine Best Management
And Financing Structure For Site

BY KYLE JOHNSON

A quick resolution is unlikely for the future of the former Eastern Branch Boys & Girls Club building, according to Chuck Burger, the chair of a task force formed by District Councilmember Tommy Wells to research the building and provide recommendations to the District Council.

Burger said the city won't officially own the building, located at the corner of Massachusetts Ave. and 17th St. SE, until early next year when the sale is closed. The Council approved emergency legislation in June authorizing the city's \$20 million purchase of the Eastern Branch building and two other Boys and Girls Clubs' facilities in Columbia Heights and Georgetown.

The task force has toured the facility and is in the early stages of determining the condition of the site and the time and money it will take to make the building suitable for use by community organizations. The Boys and Girls Club has provided an estimate to the task force for the repairs needed, but the group is rechecking those findings.

"The building's not collapsing, but there are several failure points that need to be addressed," Burger said. "But it's like buying a house. The seller will tell you anything."

The task force is now looking for a struc-

tural engineering team to examine the site pro bono, and Burger said the job might be offered to area college students.

The Biggest Hurdle

Closing the sale of the building and determining the condition of the facility is the necessary first step to the reopening of the Eastern Branch. The next step is a much bigger challenge -- figuring out the site's ideal management structure, one that is financially independent and sustainable over the long-term.

Hill East organization Neighbors United was formed shortly after the Eastern Branch site was vacated, and the group's ultimate goal is to run the building and provide a range of community services out of the site. Burger said the task force has been approached by many other organizations offering "everything from daycare to senior services."

"We've been getting a lot of different ideas. There are a lot of successful organizations on the Hill that need expanded space," he said.

Whoever ultimately runs the building, the facility will still be owned by the city, according to Wells' Chief of Staff Charles



Chuck Burger is heading the task force to determine the best disposition of the Eastern Branch

Allen. He added that the city is technically responsible for making necessary repairs to the building, but the entity running the site could be made responsible.

Without the financial backing of the city or a large foundation, the future tenants face a steep challenge and a “pretty radical” charge, Burger said. Because the property is city-owned, financing repairs or new construction could prove particularly difficult for the management structure picked.

The Eastern Branch task force has collaborated with a national organization that works with non-profit groups to help them succeed. That organization is working to create a best practices list for the task force by compiling case studies from successful projects that are similar to the Eastern Branch.

The Last Hurdle

Once the task force works through all the questions and provides recommendations to Wells, community meetings will be held and decisions for the site will begin to be made.

Allen and Burger said it’s too early in the process to determine when the building could reopen.

“It all depends on how we’re able to structure it,” Burger said. “We’re going to do it as fast as possible but we’re not going to build something that’s not going to last or not be successful.”

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